



ASIA-PACIFIC FORESTRY COMMISSION

SIXTH MEETING OF THE APFC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chiang Mai, Thailand, 5-6 November 2009

SUMMARY OF THE MEETING

Day 1

OPENING OF THE MEETING

1. The 6th Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) Executive Committee was convened 5-6 November 2009, in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The timetable and participant list are attached in the Annexes A and B, respectively.
2. In the absence of the Chairman of APFC, Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Binh, one of the Vice-Chairs of APFC, Mr. Kanawi Pouru, Managing Director, Papua New Guinea Forest Authority was nominated as substitute Chair for the two days that the meeting was convened. Mr. Pouru welcomed the participants to the Sixth Meeting of the APFC Executive Committee. Thereafter he called upon the participants to introduce themselves.
3. Mr. Patrick Durst, Senior Forestry Officer, FAO RAP and APFC Secretariat, introduced the objectives of the meeting, the most important matters being preparations for upcoming APFC sessions and a 2nd Forestry Week, as well as an assessment of current APFC strategy and activities. He went on to explain that this meeting would represent some challenges in comparison to previous Executive Committee Meetings, with the view that several participants did not have extensive previous experience to APFC work. However, he was optimistic that new ideas and guidance would come out of this and welcomed the new committee representatives. Finally, a presentation of the RAPO staff and their responsibilities was made.
4. Mr. Jim Carle, Chief, Forest Resources Development Service (FOMR), FAO/ HQ, in his opening remarks commented on the global significance of the Asia-Pacific region in relation to the forestry sector. He noted that many challenges lay ahead, but that this is combined with a remarkably enhanced focus on the sector in the global news agenda recently. The forestry sector's importance in relation to climate change, natural resource management and bioenergy were used as examples of this. Mr. Carle mentioned emerging changes in the FAO organization, and that new reforms in the Forestry Department will soon be implemented. The regional forestry commissions are recognized as an absolute critical institution for the organization and are likely to increase its importance in the near future. In closing, Mr. Carle recognized the great work that the APFC is doing in the region and praised the Partners' Roundtable (which preceded the APFC EC meeting) for being both relevant and widely encompassing.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

5. The participants adopted the proposed agenda without any amendments.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT BY THE APFC SECRETARIAT

Revisiting the road

6. Mr. Durst reviewed the 5th Executive Committee Meeting and shared experiences from hosting the 1st Asia-Pacific Forestry Week in conjunction with the 22nd APFC Session. He also brought forward the impact of the economic crisis and the continued focus on REDD. Mr. Durst noted that the main parameter for assessing the performance of the Executive Committee would be to look at what is achieved between the APFC Sessions.

Timeline for upcoming APFC activities

7. Mr. Durst commented on the upcoming timeline. He pointed out that the altering of FAO calendar would contribute to a doubling up of APFC Sessions – with the 23rd and 24th Sessions poised to be organized in the first half of 2010 and the second half of 2011, respectively. A short preliminary discussion on next APFC Session took place in view of such change. The members of the Committee also proposed that the APFC Sessions should be convened in different years from the UNFF.

8. It was suggested that the Pacific Heads of Forestry could have a preparatory meeting for the 24th APFC Session in China. Also related to that event was a remark made from the Chinese side that they for the time being would prefer hosting the 24th APFC Session in the first half of 2011 (rather than in the 2nd half of that year as indicated by the Secretariat), but that this would be further discussed during the second day of the meeting.

Focus of this EC Meeting

9. Mr. Durst referred to the Terms of Reference as a guideline for the matters that the Executive Committee has to handle. He encouraged the members to provide guidance to the APFC Secretariat during this meeting. He also mentioned the importance of assessing APFC partnership arrangements, and recommended reviewing the strategic focus and direction of the Executive Committee

10. Several participants noted that it would be advisable to further prioritize and limit the recommendations stemming from the APFC Sessions.

UPDATE AND PROGRESS OF ONGOING APFC ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES, INCLUDING REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 22nd SESSION OF APFC

Forests and climate change

11. Mr. Simmathiri Appanah, National Forest Programme Adviser, FAO RAP, presented a review of the recommendations of the 22nd Session of APFC and follow-up actions related to “Forests and Climate Change”. The brief presentation was followed by a discussion by the members.

12. It was pointed out that in regards to “Forests and Climate Change” consideration should be given to the level at which issues should be addressed. Not all issues would necessarily fall into the ambit of APFC. Others would be better addressed at national or local levels. Priority should be given to find a proper portfolio of activities related to climate change. Likewise, there are matters that are preferably left for other organizations to undertake.

13. There was extensive discussion on the REDD regimes; questions were even raised on the value of REDD schemes evolving further into REDD+ and REDD++ schemes – would they actually benefit the forestry sector and its reputation in the long-run. Progress of REDD has in some cases been slower than the members of the Committee expected. The focus of REDD needs to go beyond its normal premises and many countries need strengthened policy support. The participants recommended incorporation of land-changes from agriculture, people and livelihoods, forest harvesting, and forest conservation as critical factors in the climate change equation.

14. A final question was posed as to how best APFC would effectively contribute to the ongoing debates on climate change. In this respect, it was suggested that APFC should seek to identify and discuss drivers of deforestation, monitoring of carbon, and respond to other conventions that include social aspects of forest management.

Forests and people

15. Ms. Josefina Munoz, Intern, FAO RAPO, gave a presentation on the topic “Forests and People”. She emphasized that APFC is addressing different sub-themes (forest tenure, SFM guidelines, poverty alleviation, payments for environmental services) now through various activities as a direct response to recommendations from the 22nd Session of APFC. Ms. Munoz also shed light on the fact that most of the ongoing projects are country-specific, and invited the participants to suggest on more regional approaches.

16. The Committee admitted that it would indeed be a challenge to find truly regional approaches. One tangible suggestion would be to have forums for “lessons learnt”, where representatives from different countries could participate to share their experiences on activities being made to improve livelihoods, as an example. It was further suggested that the regional information should be made available to others beyond that of the pilot programs. APFC could play a role in coordinating workshops and initiate networks on project management in this field, if appropriate in collaboration with other organizations.

17. The members also outlined the need for better data to integrate policy planning, and the challenges associated with getting national governments to comply with agreed requirements. Other comments were made on the potentially dominant influence policies tend to have on matters relating to people and forestry. Forestry/agriculture policy networks were suggested as a vehicle for APFC to have more impact in the region. Another idea was to develop a “tool kit”, which could facilitate the process of sound policy decision making. Finally, the representative from SPC informed the participants of an initiative related to information sharing between South Pacific countries, where the aim is to share knowledge pertaining to agriculture and forest policies.

Asia Pacific Forest Invasive Species Network (APFISN)

18. Mr. K.V. Sankaran, APFISN Coordinator, presented on the activities that have been carried out by the network during the period 2008-2009. He mentioned several milestones but also shed light on certain shortcomings and challenges.

19. The Secretariat praised APFISN for being one of the most successful initiatives under APFC. The ability to work with and draw support from different partners was commended. It was further remarked that FAO Headquarters has picked up the APFISN model, and is working on establishing similar networks in Africa and Latin America. The Committee nevertheless recognized that the network faces numerous constraints regarding time and funding, particularly in view of other commitments that Mr. Sankaran in his new task as Director of KFRI will be occupied with.

Trade, forest law compliance and governance (FLEG)

20. Mr. Durst gave a short presentation on the topic. Activities on FLEG were a direct result of recommendations from the 22nd Session of APFC. National reports, regional workshops and Codes of Practice are the most substantial achievements so far.

21. It was noted that there is a lack of strategies to achieve FLEG. Direct recommendations from the Committee were made for streamlining the monitoring and trade procedures. A short discussion centered on how the crucial question on what is acceptable and what is not (for example, in terms of trade) has not been adequately addressed. The importance of involving the private sector in this issue was also underlined.

Asia Pacific Forestry Outlook Study II (APFSOS II)

22. Mr. Sverre Tvinnereim, Assistant Professional Officer FAO RAP, presented briefly on the status of the Study, and that the final publications will be issued at the end of this year. He further pointed out that the work did not end there, and invited the participants to discuss on how to make sure that the knowledge and insights from APFSOS II can be adopted by the member countries in a fruitful manner.

23. The Secretariat encouraged the countries themselves to take the initiative to publish guidelines and stipulate follow-up activities based on APFSOS II. It was pointed out that one of the most difficult parts of the study relates to trade, and that regrettably the outcome in this area had not been satisfactory. The Committee commented that with the Outlook Study, the process is equally (or more) important than the final product. It is hoped that APFSOS II may trigger a focus on change management and that it would help countries to assess and handle future risks and opportunities.

Think Tank

24. Mr. Appanah gave a short presentation on the topic, mentioning the successful Forest Policy Short Course, further encouraging developments, and sought the Committee's views.

25. The Committee pointed out the importance and uniqueness of the Think Tank initiative – it provides a very practical link for many projects. They strongly encouraged that this initiative should continue to foster forestry reforms, through guiding activities in the right direction. Suggestions were made to strengthen its work in countries which require additional attention. In addition, the Secretariat will be looking at the possibilities of expanding the short course to other countries.

National Forest Program (NFP) Facility

26. Ms. Xiaojie Fan, National Forest Program Facilitator, FAO RAP, presented on progress of NFP Facility in the region. The presentation was followed by a discussion and comments from the participants.

27. The members of the Committee mentioned the importance of evaluation regarding constraints and challenges pertaining to the NFP Facility. They proposed that some of these issues could potentially be addressed under the Think Tank initiative, thus creating a natural synergy. It was mentioned that many countries had not become partners of the NFP Facility owing to the small size of the grant. Another was that several countries do not look favorably to working with NGOs who are the main recipients of the Facility grants. The Secretariat encouraged the participants to think forward and come up with project ideas for the future.

Review of Partners' Roundtable and discussion on partnerships and collaborations

28. Ms. Fan presented the review of the Partners' Roundtable just prior to the Executive Committee meeting. This was followed with a quick introduction to APFC's partnerships and collaborations. Thereafter, the participants were asked to reflect on the following questions:

- What do we really want to achieve from this event (the Partners' Roundtable)?
- Is it worthwhile to organize the Partners' Roundtable?
- Is the time sufficient (half day)?
- Do we have a fair number of participants?

29. The Committee provided an unequivocal "yes" to the question on whether the Partners' Roundtable is worthwhile organizing. There was a strong feeling that this meeting is extremely useful in strengthening the collaboration and exchange of information with partnering organizations. It was further acknowledged that the gathering was very informative in terms of understanding what all the different organizations are doing. Many expressed that the richness and diversity of the participants at the Partners' Roundtable was a pleasant surprise and it exceeded their expectations.

30. In relation to the question of whether sufficient time was allocated for the Partners' Roundtable, the participants' views were more ambiguous. Some remarked that there was no time for discussion following the organizations' presentation of ongoing activities, and proposed to expand the event with an additional half or one day. The Secretariat commented that this is an appealing idea, but that we would then run the risk of losing participants before the meeting draws to a conclusion. Finally, a proposal emerged to present the recommendations from future APFC sessions at these Partners' Roundtable meetings. This would be viable if the recommendations could come in fewer numbers, and could potentially be an interesting avenue for generating interest and collaboration from other organizations in pursuing APFC priority areas.

31. The value of having partners was strongly recognized by the participants. As it was said, we not only do not want to do everything by ourselves, we are equally not able to do so. An interesting and important balancing act was described between retaining control and involving partners. Further remarks were made hinting to letting the organization in charge of a project have the freedom to evolve and develop their particular area of work.

Day 2

ROLE OF THE APFC AND FUTURE APFC ACTIVITIES

Planning for the 23rd Session of APFC (2010)

32. Mr. Durst made a presentation on the organization of a 23rd Session of APFC. He outlined expectations and responsibilities from FAO's side. Similarly, he went through some of the inputs that are expected from the host country's side, and proposed an approximate timeline in which crucial actions and preparations need to be completed. An important initial component of this is the formal agreement, and the participants agreed to Chair's invitation to hear the thoughts of the Bhutan government, as they at an earlier stage have expressed interest in hosting the event.

33. Mr. Gopal Mahat, Chief Forestry Officer, Forest Protection and Utilization Division, Department of Forests, on behalf of Mr. Karma Dukpa, Bhutan's Director of Forests, presented on Bhutan's thoughts for hosting the 23rd Session of APFC. He outlined the logistical arrangements and facilities that could be used for the session, and announced that upon the Committee's decision to hold the Session in Bhutan, country preparations would begin. The dates 8-11 June 2010 were suggested and tentatively agreed upon. Possible flight routes were presented as well as a brief introduction to the interesting aspects that Bhutan possesses for visitors. It was further motioned that FAO and Bhutan will have to discuss the responsibilities and timetable in greater detail.

34. The members of the Committee discussed the potential of Bhutan hosting the 23rd Session of APFC. Participants expressed enthusiasm on the prospect, particularly in light of the sound forest management and vast forest cover the country maintains. Discussion around practical matters touched on visas, flight arrangements, possible meeting venues and the need to cater to a relatively big number of participants. It was further mentioned that the 23rd Session of APFC should seek to give importance to the International Year of Biodiversity 2010 and, if suitable, also promote the International Year of Forests 2011. Mr. Mahat was grateful for the response from the Committee and acknowledged the responsibilities for the host country pertaining to this event.

An agreement of Bhutan hosting the 23rd Session of APFC was formally endorsed by the Committee. Mr. Mahat acknowledged the endorsement and the opportunity this represents for his country.

Discussion on agenda topics and themes for the 23rd Session of APFC

35. Mr. Appanah led the plenary discussion and engaged the Committee members in brainstorming possible themes and agenda topics for the APFC Session the following year. Some of the possible themes proposed by the participants included:

- Forest for livelihood, and conservations of biodiversity and culture;
- Forestry conservation – biodiversity and carbon storehouse;
- Climate, people and forests;
- Gross national happiness and forests;
- Celebrating success – learning from failure;
- Forestry for poverty alleviation;
- Holistic landscape view; and
- Wood is good – how to increase investment in the forestry sector.

36. The Committee acknowledged that the host country too should be involved in deciding the main themes and title of the 23rd Session of APFC. It was emphasized that new ideas and a distinct concept was needed for APFC to be able to stand out and attract the attention through this event.

37. The Committee next “brain-stormed” on the in-session themes and specific agenda items. Ideas that arose could be clustered into six different areas: i) climate change and deforestation, ii) forest, people and poverty reduction, iii) how countries make use of biodiversity, forest biodiversity and conservation, iv) economy and funding opportunities, monitoring assessment and reinventing SFM, v) forestry thrust as a centre stage – avoiding stage fright, and vi) key areas for corporation.

38. Following the above exercise, the participants elaborated further on the planning of the sessions. It was considered important that the organization with special expertise within a given topic would take the lead in organizing the session, and that some “handing-over” of responsibility and control would be acceptable. In line with this, the representative from RECOFTC expressed willingness to work together with APFC in organizing certain sessions at the event, particularly that related to forests and livelihoods. Several participants stated the importance of giving various organizations the opportunity to present their activities and/or co-host parts of the program. To the degree possible, the Committee would also like to see the private sector being involved. A specific suggestion was introduced to convene a session on “How do you make failures into successes?”.

39. The Secretariat made some remarks on the possible structure of the session, with in-session seminars and a “Heads of Forests discussion”; this would possibly break up the formality of the meeting, stimulate discussion, and make the reporting of the session less rigorous. Finally, participants noted that it would be important to carefully consider options for a field trip, including its timing in the program.

Initial planning for the 24th Session of APFC and related events

40. Mr. Durst briefly introduced expectations from FAO’s side and proposed a tentative timeline in which preparations would occur. He mentioned the need to reconfirm with the host government (China) since there had been an inconsistency in the Chinese and English acceptance letters related to hosting the 24th Session of APFC and associated events.

41. Ms. Wang Xuehong, Senior Programme Manager, APFNet Secretariat, presented views of 24th APFC Session on behalf of the Chinese government. She reconfirmed that China is willing and eager to host the 24th Session of APFC. Beijing was identified as a suitable venue for the event. Mr. Qu Guilin, DG of International Cooperation, SFA, and Ms. Liu Xin, Deputy Director of APFNet Secretariat, will be the focal points for communication. However, she mentioned that currently the Chinese intend to convene the event in the first half of 2011, but she stressed that this might be open for adjustments. Ms. Xuehong proposed that implementing a timeline for the preparations would start immediately after the completion of the 23rd Session of APFC. She indicated that potential partners and sponsors should be approached in collaboration by China and FAO. She also reconfirmed China’s intention to host the 2nd Asia Pacific Forestry Week in conjunction with the 24th Session of APFC. Themes and participants for the 2nd Forestry Week and the theme for the 24th Session of APFC are to be decided jointly by China and FAO. Some initial thought on the logistics were also mention by Ms. Xuehong. The presentation was followed by a discussion.

42. The Committee showed satisfaction with China’s reconfirmation to hosting the 24th Session of APFC and related events. Several participants noted that this should be an excellent opportunity to attract and engage the private sector, and that effort should be given to take advantage of this. The Secretariat laid out its intention to cooperate with the host country in deciding suitable overall theme and topics for discussion, creating space for other organizations and the private sector, as well as collaborate on the logistical arrangements. Field trips were suggested as crucial to the overall experience for participants, and it was stressed that this should be open to all participants (and not only to the participants of the 24th Session of APFC). It was again mentioned that APFC should take advantage of the fact that 2011 will be the International Year of Forests. As the indicated events in China are still a fair bit into the future, the Committee remarked that this topic would have to be revisited in further detail at the next Executive Committee meeting.

Discussion on APFC's strategic focus and cooperating partners

43. Mr. Durst made a presentation on the future focus, improvements, opportunities and threats to the Commission. He also mentioned the importance of being prepared for challenges and to build on strengths and capacities. The main findings from a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis, which was carried out at an earlier Executive Committee meeting, was brought to the attention of the participants. The main recommendations of an Evaluation Report (partly external; finalized in November 2007), was also presented.

44. Next, Mr. Tvinnereim presented briefly on the results from a survey of APFC-related matters that was conducted with the participants' as interviewees (see Appendix C). The Committee was then invited to share their immediate reactions, both to the SWOT analysis/evaluation and to the survey.

45. Several suggestions were received, which included the need to make foresters and forestry more interesting, APFC to have an inter-sectoral approach to social and environmental concerns, and to be more open to the private sector and NGOs. Through collaborating more extensively with external partners, APFC would be able to be *both* focused and varied. The participants found that the survey to be useful, and agreed that it should be distributed more widely to the member states (preferably to their Heads of Forest).

46. Messrs. Tvinnereim and Appanah then conducted an exercise to shed light on APFC's perceived strengths and weaknesses, and to garner ideas for future activities that could strengthen and bring more attention to the work of the organization. Response to the question, "What does APFC do best?" included: undertaking policy studies and programmes such as APFSOS, organizing events and information sharing, coordination role, and linkages. The second question, "What do we not do particularly well" triggered responses that could be classified broadly into five groups: i) publicity – to reach out, ii) engaging private sector, iii) responding to different stakeholders, iv) follow-up on recommendations, and v) no complaints. The third question invited the participants to give "completely different" ideas for activities that could help APFC to stand out in a crowded field. Some of the answers included: transfer the Secretariat to another country or RECOFTC, convene a workshop in the forests, make FAO work together with ITTO and UNFF, competitions in forestry among school children, and make cartoons on forests and to issue postage stamps to mark the 2nd Forestry Week.

OTHER BUSINESS

47. Mr. Carle made a presentation outlining FAO's World Forestry Congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina with a new vision – to inspire to work more effectively with our clients. He reiterated the importance of capitalizing on the upcoming International Year of Biodiversity (2010) and the International Year of Forests (2011), and that FAO will co-chair the latter; these events could be used to raise awareness and hold events for political understanding.

CLOSING OF THE SIXTH MEETING OF THE APFC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

48. The 6th APFC Executive Committee Meeting was closed by the Chair, Mr. Pouru, with closing remarks from Mr. Carle and Mr. Durst. They mentioned that it had been an enlightening meeting with new people and that they appreciated learning about the pressing issues and the complex topics that the participants face. An appreciation of all contributions from countries and invited organizations, as well as old and new Committee members, was made. The support and hard work of the FAO-team and the great chairing by the Chair, Mr. Pouru, were equally acknowledged.

49. The Chair ended the meeting by thanking everybody for their excellent contributions and guidance for the upcoming APFC Session. He mentioned the good opportunity to be briefed by Bhutan and China and the global WFC in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He hoped that the current members would continue to provide the required support until the next meeting.

Annex A

Thursday, 5 November 2009

09.00-09.30	Welcome and opening of the Sixth Meeting of the APFC Executive Committee	
	Welcome and opening	Chairperson, APFC Mr. Patrick Durst, APFC Secretary
	Opening remarks	Mr. Jim Carle, Chief, Forest Management Service, Forestry Department, FAO/HQs
	Introductions	
	Adoption of the agenda	Chair
09.30-10.00	Discovering the importance of this Executive Committee meeting	
09.30-10.00	Introductory remarks by the Secretariat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the meeting • Review of the 5th Executive Committee Meeting • Thoughts on timeline for future APFC activities • Perspectives from participants 	Mr. Patrick Durst
10.00-10.30	Coffee break	
10.30-17.00	Briefing and discussions on APFC and FAO activities in the region	
10.30-12.00	Review of the recommendations of the 22nd Session of APFC and follow-up actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forests and climate change • Forests and people: enhancing forest-based livelihoods and participation in forestry • Asia Pacific Forest Invasive Species Network 	Mr. S. Appanah, National Forest Programme Adviser, FAO/RAP Ms. J. Munoz, Intern, FAO/RAP Mr. K.V. Sankaran, Coordinator, APFISN
12.00-13.15	Lunch	
13.15-15.30	Updates on ongoing APFC activities (continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade, forest law compliance and governance • Second Asia-Pacific Forestry Outlook Study • Asia-Pacific Forest Policy Initiative (Think Tank) • NFP Facility 	Mr. Patrick Durst Mr. Sverre Tvinnereim, Associate Professional Officer, FAO/RAP Mr. S. Appanah Ms. Xiaojie Fan, NFP Facilitator, FAO/RAP
15.30-16.00	Coffee break	
16.00-17.00	Review of Partners' Roundtable and discussion on partnerships and collaborations	Ms. Xiaojie Fan
19.30-21:00	Reception Dinner	

Friday, 6 November 2009

08.30-10.00	Planning for 23rd Session of APFC	
08.30-10.00	Initial thoughts and preparations for the upcoming 23rd Session of APFC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Agenda items and main theme(s) • Initial preparations and next steps • Timeline • Perspectives from Bhutan • Others 	<p>Mr. Patrick Durst</p> <p>Mr. Gopal Mahat, Chief Forestry Officer, FPUD, Bhutan</p>
10.00-10.30	Coffee break	
10.30-12.00	Planning for future APFC events	
10:30-12:00	Discussion and key decisions to support 24th Session of APFC and 2nd Forestry Week <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial preparations and next steps • Perspectives from China • Others 	<p>Mr. Patrick Durst</p> <p>Ms. W. Xuehong, Senior Program Manager, APFNet Secretariat</p>
12.00-13.00	Lunch	
13.00-14.45	Better forestry through a dynamic organization	
13:00-14:45	Strategic discussion on APFC	<p>Mr. Patrick Durst</p> <p>Mr. Sverre Tvinnereim</p>
14.45-15.15	Other business	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developments in FAO/HQ • Integrated Year of Biodiversity (2010) • Integrated Year of Forests (2011) • World Forestry Congress • Other matters 	Mr. Jim Carle
15.15-15.30	Closing of the 6th Meeting of the APFC Executive Committee	<p>Mr. Jim Carle</p> <p>Mr. Patrick Durst</p> <p>Chairperson</p>

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